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ANNUAL REPORT  
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Medical Officer of Health  
FOR THE  
Year 1939.



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# Urban District of Ottery St. Mary.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF  
THE OTTERY ST. MARY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Madam and Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my 17th Annual Report dealing with matters concerning the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for 1939. Owing to the war the Ministry has recommended that the Report should be shorter than usual.

## STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The Area of the District comprises 10,008 Acres, and the population at the Census taken in 1939 was 4,005. This was an increase of nearly 300 on the Census taken in 1931. When the war started a considerable number of official and unofficial evacuees came to our District. The unaccompanied children number about 90, but it is difficult to give figures for the unofficial evacuees.

The number of Inhabited Houses in the District is 1,075, and the average number of inmates is about 4.

The Rateable Value is £17,623, and the sum represented by the nett produce of a penny rate is £68 8s. 7d.

The neighbourhood is largely an Agricultural one. There are no occupations in the District having a prejudicial effect on the health.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

			Total	M	F	
Live Births	Legitimate		37	18	19	{ Birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ... 10·2
	Illegitimate		0	0	0	
Stillbirths	...	...	1	1	0	
Deaths	...	...	54	24	30	{ Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population 17·0
Deaths from Puerperal Causes	...	...	...	...	...	
						{ from sepsis ... 0
						{ from other ... 0

## Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—

All Infants	...	...	...	0
Legitimate Infants	...	...	...	0
Illegitimate Infants	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ „ Diarrhæa (under 2 years)	...	...	...	0

Of the 54 deaths—17 occurred in persons who had reached the age of 70 and upwards, and 13 who had reached the age of 80 and upwards.

There was 1 death in a person over 90.

The average age for death in the District is 66·1.

There were 7 deaths from Cancer, 3 from Tuberculosis, 7 from Cerebral Hæmorrhage, 2 Accidental, and 0 Suicidal.

6 of the deaths were transferable. The number of deaths is considerably lower than last year.

There has not been much unemployment this last year, and I can trace no evidence that unemployment has exercised any deleterious influence on the health of the children or adults.

The Medical men in the District do their best to arouse public interest in the prevention of ill health and in the importance of early treatment, but no public lectures on health have been given. The various members of the Council use their personal influence to help to create some enthusiasm with regard to matters of public and private health amongst the townsfolk.

## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

For general sickness the needs of the District and neighbouring Areas are well served by the Ottery St. Mary and District Cottage Hospital.

During the year 161 Patients have been In-Patients in the Hospital, the average duration of the stay being 20 days.

59 Operations were performed during the year.

42 Accidents were treated, and 1,429 Out-Patients Attendances were made.

The average number of beds occupied during the year was 10.

## MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

During the year the Centre was opened 48 times, and there were 48 mothers on the register, and 50 children.

The number of Attendances were :—

Mothers.	...	...	742
Infants under 1 year	...	...	291
Toddlers (1—5 years)	...	...	517

The general arrangements for Hospitals, Clinics, Laboratories, etc, remains the same as last year.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

During the year a chlorination plant was installed and the main water to the Town has now been proved by analysis to be excellent.

The water is collected into high and low level storage tanks from springs on East Hill.

There are 681 houses in the Area served by this water supply. In the Rural Area the houses obtain their water from springs and wells.

On West Hill there is a private water supply which is utilised by a number of houses.

At Tipton St. John's there is a public water supply in the middle of the village. There are five springs which run into a well about 12 feet deep, and a good supply is thus obtained. There is also a public pump at Wiggaton.

The Town Sewerage and Drainage consists of a main drainage scheme of a sewer leading to a septic tank from which the sewage passes over six filter beds to the irrigation area. The proposed scheme for improving the sewage system has been postponed on account of the war. During the year the sewers have become choked on a few occasions and have received immediate attention. When discovered, defective house drains have been repaired by the owners.

In the Rural Areas some of the houses are provided with cess-pits.

In the Town Area the houses are provided with water closets, but in many cases one w.c. serves two houses.

In the Rural Area the majority of the houses are provided with Pail Privies, the contents of which are disposed of by the occupiers in their gardens or allotments.

## RIVERS AND STREAMS.

There is to my knowledge no real pollution of the rivers and streams, and no particular action in this matter has therefore been considered necessary.

## SHOPS AND OFFICES.

No action has been taken during the year under the provisions of the Shops Act, 1934, or under the Public Health Act, 1936.

## SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action has been necessary under this heading.

## SCHOOLS.

The Sanitary Arrangements and Water Supply to the Schools has been satisfactory.



## CAMPING SITES.

- |  |     |     |     |    |
|--|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1. Number of Sites in the Area which were used for Camping purposes during 1939  | ... | ... | ... | 4  |
| 2. Number of Camping Sites in respect of which licences have been issued by the Local Authority under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936 | ... | ... | ... | 2  |
| 3. The estimated maximum number of campers resident in the Area at one time during the Summer season 1939  | ... | ... | ... | 20 |

## SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are no private or public baths or pools in the Area.

## ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

No action was taken under this heading.

## SCAVENGING.

In the Town Area a Twice-Weekly Collection of House Refuse is carried out by the Council's Workmen, who also during the year have performed satisfactorily the work of cleansing the street gullies and catch-pits.

In the Rural Area Indestructible Refuse is collected once a month throughout the year.

## WORK OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

The Sanitary Inspector reports to me as follows regarding the work and nature of Inspections made by him during the past year.

Dwelling-houses	...	...	70
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk-shops	...	...	68
Bake-houses	...	...	32
Factories and Workshops	...	...	52
Slaughter-houses	..	...	350
Miscellaneous Inspections for the Detection of Nuisances	...	...	342
15 Notices were served, 15 being complied with,			
These Notices comprised 15 Preliminary Notices			
	...	...	15

## HOUSING.

## I. General Housing Conditions.

There is not much to report this year about the general housing conditions. During the year 13 new houses were erected by private enterprise.



## 2. Overcrowding.

There were no cases of Overcrowding during the year.

## 3. Fitness of Houses.

The houses in the working-part District are mostly of the cottage type. The general character of defects existing in some of the houses are poor surroundings, deficient light and air and dampness.

Cases of unfitness are dealt with as they occur.

There are no unhealthy Areas in the District.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

### (a) Milk.

The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops have been periodically inspected and found to be kept in a satisfactory condition.

Any defects are pointed out by the Sanitary Inspector, who sees that his recommendations are carried out.

No refusal or revocation or registration of retailers or of licences for graded milk has been made.

142 Samples of Milk were taken and examined for cleanliness, and 99 of these passed the test. 11 Samples were examined for Tuberculosis, and 9 of these were found negative, the other 2 being inconclusive. The percentage of Samples which pass the test is much higher than in previous years. The Samples are examined and reported upon by the County Bacteriologist. When a sample taken shows a poor test the Sanitary Inspector visits the dairyman and gives instructions as to how to improve the purity of the supply.

140-lbs. of Argentine Butter were found to be unfit for human consumption, and were condemned.

### (b) Meat.

The Slaughter-houses have been inspected and found to be clean and well conducted.

All Animals slaughtered in the District are inspected by the Meat Inspector. Condemned meat is buried in quick-lime, and with disinfectants, at the Council's expense.

The use of the Humane Killer is compulsory.

## Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle, ex- cluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed (if known)	471		71	1202	619
Number Inspected ...	471		71	1202	619
<i>All Diseases except Tuberculosis.</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	0	0	0	0	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..		0	0	1	1
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...		0		0.1	0.1
<i>Tuberculosis only.</i>					
Whole carcasses con- demned ...	0	0	0	0	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...		0		1	1
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuber- culosis ...		0			0

## (c) Adulteration.

No action has been taken under the Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act, 1928, the Artificial Cream Act, 1929, the Public Health (Condensed Milk) Regulations, 1923 and 1927, the Public Health (Dried Milk) Regulations, 1923, 1927, and the Public Health (Preservation in Food, etc.) Regulations, 1925 and 1927.

## (d) Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food.

No use of Laboratories under this heading has been made.

## (e) Nutrition.

No particular steps have been taken to increase the knowledge of the public in this matter, but the medical men in the District all help to spread useful information, and the Medical Officer and Nurses at the Infant Welfare Centre lecture the mothers on Nutrition.

## (f) Shell-fish (Molluscum.)

There are no Shell-fish Beds in our District.

## PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

This year showed a marked freedom from Infectious Disease. For the first time for some years the notification of Measles and Whooping Cough has been compulsory, but very few of either of these diseases were notified. The Alum Precipitated Toxoid of Messrs. Parke Davis & Co. was used for the prophylactic control of Diphtheria. 125 children were given two doses each at an interval of 3 to 4 weeks. 110 of the children were of school age, the remainder being under school age. No action has been taken with regard to Measles Serum for prophylaxis or attenuation, and no facilities have been used for the typing of pneumococci.

There are no other noteworthy facts about any other Infectious Diseases, or remedies which have been tried.

There were no notifications of Malaria, Dysentery, Trench Fever or Encephalitis Lethargica.

The School intimations serve as a useful guide as to the amount of illness amongst the children, and may bring to the notice of the Medical Officer of Health serious diseases which are not reported by the parents.

Bacteriological specimens such as throat swabs, sputum, blood, etc. are sent to the Public Health Department in Exeter for examination.

There has been no Small Pox in the Area.

With regard to Tuberculosis—every effort has been made by the medical men in the Area to ensure early diagnosis and notification, and when there is any doubt the services of the County Tuberculosis Officer are at once procured. No deaths occurred in cases which had not been previously notified.

No action was taken during the year under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936, for the prevention of blindness. Any serious disease or injury to the eyes are referred to the Eye Infirmary in Exeter.

Eight premises were disinfected during the year after the removal of patients suffering from infectious disease.

## TUBERCULOSIS.

No action was taken under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, or under Section 172 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1939.

<i>Disease.</i>	<i>Total Cases Notified.</i>	<i>Cases admitted to Hospital.</i>	<i>Total Deaths.</i>
Small Pox ... ..	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever ... ..	1 (aged 10)	1	0
Diphtheria ... ..	0	0	0
Enteric Fever... .. (including Paratyphoid)	0	0	0
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis ... ..	1 (aged 18)	1	0
Measles ... ..	2 (aged 5)	0	0
Whooping Cough ...	3 (aged 5)	0	0

OPHTHALMIA NEANATORUM.—Nil.

During the year 4 new cases of Tuberculosis were notified.

TUBERCULOSIS.—New Cases and Mortality during 1939.

<i>Age Periods.</i>	<i>New Cases.</i>				<i>Deaths</i>			
	<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pul'ary</i>		<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pul'ary</i>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
0 .....								
1 .....								
{ 5 .....	...		...	..	0	...	0	...
{ 15 .....								
{ 25 .....	1	1	...	...	0	0	0	...
{ 25 .....	1		...	...	0	0	...	...
{ 32 .....					1	...	...	...
{ 35 .....	...		...	...				
{ 45 .....	...		...	...	...	0	...	0
{ 55 .....	...		...	0	0	...	...	...
65 and upwards	...	1	...	...	...	0	1	1
Totals .....	2	2		0	1	0	1	1

There were 3 deaths from Tuberculosis during the year.  
All these had been previously been notified.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F. N. SIDEBOTHAM, M.A., M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.









